

Red Clay's Kimberly Stock named 2021 Delaware Teacher of the Year

An English learner teacher from the Red Clay Consolidated School District is Delaware's 2021 State Teacher of the Year.

Kimberly Stock of McKean High School now is Delaware's nominee for National Teacher of the Year. She will use her position to share her message about how schools must adapt to give students equitable access and opportunities.

Secretary of Education Susan Bunting made the announcement by surprising family and colleagues gathered at McKean High to view the virtual celebration at a socially distanced watch party. The virtual celebration honored all 20 district and charter teachers of the year who, due to COVID-19 precautions, watched the televised and streamed broadcast at small gatherings across the state instead of joining together at the typical statewide banquet.

Stock's passion for supporting students who face difficult challenges comes from her own life experiences. Abandoned as a child in South Korea, Stock said she does not know her age, birth place or given name.

"After living with a foster family in Korea, I was adopted by a white family in Nebraska. Despite experiencing moments of trauma, racism, illness, loss and death caused by ethnic violence, I have been given new opportunities and second chances," she said. "Only through God's grace and many opened doors by people who believed in me do I stand here today."

Now Stock tries to be the one opening those doors for her students, starting by better preparing her colleagues to instruct them.

"We must provide moments for our most vulnerable students to shine. When I surveyed staff about their training in English learner teaching methods, few said they had ever taken even one class. Meanwhile our EL population has grown over 81 percent in the last five years at McKean, making everyone a teacher of English learners," Stock said.

Stock, who teaches Advanced Placement Literature and Composition and 11th grade English language arts, manages the language acquisition plans for more than 160 McKean students. She executed a new program and curriculum that serves more students with rigorous grade-level material resulting in 100 percent of McKean's English learners graduating in 2020. She continues to provide regular professional development to McKean staff about EL teaching methods.

One current student said Stock was instrumental in helping her adjust to McKean when she arrived two years ago: "I came from the Dominican Republic and at that time, I didn't know how to communicate with my teachers or even how to start a conversation with my classmates. I felt different from the students at school because I did not know if they were being nice or mean to me, and that was something that sometimes makes me feel down, but also it pushed me to be more confident and learn English faster. Mrs. Stock went to my EL class one day, and at that moment I knew she was and is an amazing person. She does everything to make her students comfortable and happy in her class."

Making sure every student at her school feels safe and accepted is important to Stock.

"Our schools must immediately communicate that it's a safe space for our students of color, our LGBTQ students and for our students of diverse faiths," Stock said. "At different points in my education and life, certain teachers let me know that I mattered. They taught me – sometimes through words but more often by example – that a teacher can not only impart

knowledge but also be a champion for her students.”

Her career in education as both a teacher and education non-profit administrator includes work at Claymont Community Center, where she secured partnerships with school districts, non-profits and government agencies to create a new adult basic education and GED program. The adult English as a Second Language program more than doubled immigrant students served.

Stock earned her Bachelor of Science from the University of Nebraska and her first Master of Science in education from the University of Pennsylvania, where she researched the recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators of color. Her second graduate degree, a Master of Arts in teaching English as a second language from the University of Delaware, resulted in a proposed curriculum for a Methods of Teaching English Learners course for all new Delaware teachers.

As an advocate for students, Stock also is a diversity champion for her school and community, speaking on panels, serving on social justice committees and leading professional development while empowering student leadership through the Student Voices and Cultural Celebrations Advisories.

Stock inherits from outgoing Teacher of the Year Rebecca Vitelli the responsibility of representing all teachers in Delaware. She will address community groups, business leaders, legislators, and educational organizations to inform the public about the status of Delaware schools. She also will become Delaware’s candidate in the National Teacher of the Year Program, a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers sponsored by the Voya Foundation.

By action of the General Assembly, she will receive a \$5,000 grant to use for the educational benefit of her students, as well as two personal grants totaling an additional \$5,000. The remaining 19 school district/charter candidates each will

receive a personal grant of \$2,000. All 20 teachers also received gifts from Advantech Incorporated and their district superintendents or charter principal.

Stock also will receive gifts from the Delaware State Education Association, Delaware School Boards Association, Delaware Association of School Administrators and Delaware State Teachers of the Year Association; State of Delaware Teacher of the Year commemorative plates from the Division of Motor Vehicles; a full doctorate program from Wilmington University; a 10-karat gold ring from Jostens; and lunch in Washington D.C. with U.S. Sen. Tom Carper.

This year's celebration was sponsored in part by Voya Financial.

NOTE TO MEDIA: Those interested in arranging interviews with Stock on Wednesday should contact Red Clay Consolidated School District public information officer Taylor Green at Taylor.Green@redclay.k12.de.us.

Watch the virtual celebration and announcement online [here](#). Photos of Stock being named Delaware's 2021 Teacher of the Year are available [here](#).

Find information on all 20 nominees [here](#).